

A FEAST FOR THE UPRIGHT

NO. 1659

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 14, 1882,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*"For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory:
no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusts in You."
Psalm 84:11, 12.*

IN this sweet Sabbath Psalm the writer rejoices in the house of God. He evidently loves the place of godly assembly, the place where prayer and praise were offered by the united tribes of his people. But, brethren, there was no superstition in this love. He loved the house of God because he loved the God of the house. His heart and flesh cried out, not for the altar and the candlestick, but for his God. True, his soul fainted for the courts of the Lord, but the reason was that he cried out for the living God, saying, "When shall I come and appear before God?" Brethren, it is well to take an interest in the place where you gather for worship. I am always glad when brethren are moved to contribute towards the necessary maintenance of the building and the provision for its cleanliness and propriety. I hate that God should be served in a slovenly way. Even the place where we meet to worship should show some sign of reverence for His name. But still our respect for our place of assembly must never degenerate into a superstitious reverence for the mere structure, as though there were some peculiar sanctity about the spot, and prayer offered there would be more acceptable than elsewhere. The great objective of our desire must be to meet with God Himself. In hearing, the point is to hear the voice of God. In singing, the charm is truly to praise the Most High. In prayer, the main objective is to plead with God, and so to speak that our cry comes up before Him, even into His ears. Let us always remember this, and never rest content with merely going to a set place. Let us reckon that we have failed if we have not met with God. Let us come up here with strong desire for communion with the Lord in spirit and in truth.

The Psalmist also knew right well that the spiritual law runs through everything. He perceived that character is an essential, not only to acceptable worship, but to all real blessedness. In our text he speaks not of those who visit the temple, but of those who walk uprightly and trust in God. There is no necessary blessedness in visiting tabernacles and temples. In all assemblies for worship the question is, "Who are they that gather?" Are their hearts in God's ways? Are their souls thirsting after God? The promises are very rich, but to whom are the promises made? What if they are not made to us? Then, the richer they are the more sorrowful will be our loss of them.

Before I unfold the inexhaustible treasures of this marvelous portion of Scripture, I want to dwell upon this fact that these things are for a special people. *The blessing is to the man that walks uprightly*, the true-hearted man, whose course is sincere, righteous, honest, and just. He stands firmly, and he walks erect. He does not bend and lean towards the right or to the left. He has no sinister motives or crooked policies. He is straight as a line, and is not to be swayed by any side winds. It is a very suggestive figure, an upright man is not twisted, or doubled up, or wrongly inclined, or tortuous in his ways and thoughts. He stands on the square, and is distinctly perpendicular. This is the man who will enjoy the blessing from the God of Israel. Sin is a twist, and it is a twist that robs us of the blessing in our text. But, since no man is upright by nature, we are reminded of the way by which we come to be upright—"O Lord of hosts, *blessed is the man that trusts in You.*" We must have faith as the groundwork of all. Then "faith works by love," and purifies the soul, and by this purification the man is made to walk uprightly. Oh, to be resting where God bids us rest, namely, in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord Jesus! Oh, to be depending where all must depend—upon the faithfulness of the covenant-making and the covenant-keeping God. Such a man has a solid rock beneath his feet. He trusts in God, and so he stands firmly, and is able to walk uprightly, because he has a firm foothold. Judge you, then, yourselves. Do you trust in the Lord? Are you walking uprightly? If so, here is "a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well-refined."

I would say to every child of God who can claim the character I have been describing, come to the text and freely enjoy it. What; does no star of hope shine in your midnight sky? Do clouds surround you and thicken into an impenetrable gloom? Come to the text, for “the Lord God is a sun.” Here is an end to all your darkness. When He appears the night vanishes, and your light has come. Are you in great danger? Do perils surround you—temptations from the world, assaults of Satan, uprisings of your own corruption? Do you feel as if you moved in the center of a fierce fight? Is it as much as you can do even to hope that you will escape the fiery dart? Come to the text, then, and behold how He that keeps Israel has provided for your safety. Read the blessed words, “The Lord God is a shield.” He is a broad shield that shall cover you from head to foot, and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Here is perfect safety for all who take Jehovah to be their helper. “The Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun shall not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve you from all evil: He shall preserve your soul.”

But perhaps you tell me that you feel empty of all good, and dry of all joy. Spiritual life is at very low ebb with you. You can scarcely believe, much less reach to full assurance. You scarcely feel enough life to exhibit the tenderness you sigh for, and you cannot reach to the faith you desire. I hear your groans, but come along with you. Here is the exact word for you. “The Lord will give grace.” His rich free favor waits to bless the undeserving, and it is so strong and influential that those who have nothing in themselves may at once receive every precious thing. The God of all grace will give grace.

“Yes,” you say, “I have grace, but I find that the gracious life is a very struggling one. I am contending from day to day with my inward corruptions, and besides, the infirmities of old age have been creeping upon me for years, and I feel them so bitterly that I wish for the wings of a dove that I might fly away and be at rest.” Friend, you need not fly far. The text promises you the best possible rest. The Lord who says that He will give grace now tells you that He will give *glory*. Wait a little longer. The sun which shines more and more will come to perfect day. “It is better on before.” Glory will soon be in your actual possession—much sooner than you think. Between you and heaven there may be but a step. Perhaps before another sun has risen on the earth you may behold the face “of the King in His beauty in the land that is very far off.” At any rate, here is comfort for you; the same Lord who will give grace will also give glory.

Do I hear another brother sighing because he is in the depths of poverty? And is that poverty not only of bread and of water, but a poverty of soul? Do you feel straitened in spirit, and so weak that you can hardly call a promise your own? Yet, dear brother, if you are trusting in the Lord, and He has helped you to walk uprightly, do not hesitate, but come to the text, and dip your bucket into this deep and overflowing well, and fill it up to the brim, for what does the text say? “No good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.” Here is everything for nothing, everything for you, everything to be had at once according as you shall require it. It is God’s word, not mine, God’s own sure word which gives you all this blessing. Come, then, quit the dust and the darkness. Mount into brightness, and rejoice in the Lord your God, who bids you shout for joy.

Have you fears about the future? I need not stay to tell you how sweetly the text will lull them all to sleep. Yet suffer me these few sentences. Do you fear the darkness of future trial? The Lord God is your sun. Do you fear dangers which lie before you in some new sphere upon which you are just entering? The Lord will be your shield. Are there difficulties in your way? Will you need great wisdom and strength? God’s grace will be sufficient for you, and His strength will be glorified in your weakness. Do you fear failure? Do you dread final apostasy? It shall not be. He who gives you grace will without fail, give you glory. Between here and heaven there is provender for all the flock of God, so that they need not fear famishing on the road. He that leads them shall guide them into pastures that never wither, and to fountains that are never dried up, for “no good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.”

Is not this a glorious text? It overpowers me. It is a gem of priceless value. I feel as if I could not place it in a proper setting, but must hold it up just as it is, and turn it this way and that, and bid you mark how each facet flashes forth the light of heaven. It is a true Kohinoor among the gems of promise. It is so many sided, so transparent, so brilliant, it belongs to the King of kings, and He bids us wear it this day. What shall I hope to say which will be worthy of this supreme Scripture? How can my words fitly set forth this word of the Lord? It would not be an ill way of considering my text if I were to preach from it in this fashion.

First let us observe what God is, “The Lord God is a sun and a shield.” By nature He is both these to His people, and as such He is ours, for is not this a leading article in the covenant of grace, “I will be their God”? “The Lord is my portion, says my soul.” The Lord has given Himself to me as He is, even as Jehovah, the I AM. Is God omnipotent? He is almighty for His people. Is He omniscient? His wisdom cares for them. Is God omnipresent? Is God immutable? Is God eternal? Is God infinite? He is ours in all those respects. The Lord God is a sun and shield, and as sun and shield He belongs to those who are trusting in Him and walking uprightly.

If we preached thus our second head would be *what God will give*. The Lord will give grace and glory. He has given them, is giving them, and will give them, for the tense may be taken as you choose. He always will give free favor and kindly aid. He has given you grace up to now, and done great things for you, and He will show you greater things than these—

*“His grace will to the end
Stronger and brighter shine.
Nor present things, nor things to come,
Shall quench the spark divine.”*

He will supply you with grace and glory as the generous grants of His love. They are not a wage, but a gift. “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life.” Glory will come to you on free-grace terms.

And then there is, thirdly, *what the Lord will withhold*, and what is that? Why, nothing at all that is good, for “no good thing will He withhold.” We have among us some men who are great at withholding. If they give, it costs them an effort, but if they withhold, their purse strings are in their natural condition. Our God never was a withholding God yet. He makes His sun to shine upon the evil and upon the good. Ever since that first day when “He spoke and it was done,” He has gone on manifesting Himself to this world, pouring out Himself in goodness, spreading His own care and love over all, so that He is to be found filling all space and sustaining all existence. God’s blessedness delights in scattering blessings. To withhold would not enrich Him as to give does not impoverish Him. Especially to His saints does He abound, to them He gives all things. “No good thing will He withhold from those that walk uprightly.”

I am not going to preach from the text in that way. We shall survey it in another fashion. Here flows a living stream, bring your buckets with you. Take care that you do not come to this river of life merely to gaze on its surface, the river of God is full of water, and it is all intended for our use. Oh, for a hearty draft at this good hour! Here is enough and to spare, make free with it, O you trusters in the Lord.

I. First, then, out of five particulars, here are, for God’s people, BLESSINGS IN THEIR FULLNESS, for “*the Lord God is a sun.*”

The blaze of my text almost blinds me. It does not say, “God is light,” though that is true, for He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, but the words are, “the Lord God is a sun.” Then, if God is mine, I have not only light, but I have the source of light. I have for my possession the central sun from whom all light comes to this world. We have heard of one who received apples from a friend and was grateful, another was more highly favored, for his friend planted his garden with fruit trees. You and I have fruit from God and therein we are favored. Yes, but we have the Lord Himself, and thus we have the tree of life, and a perpetual supply most fresh, sweet, and constant. It is well to get a drink from a pitcher, but it is better to be like Isaac, who dwelt by the well, because then, if the pitcher becomes empty, there is an abiding supply from which to fill it. God is the source of all conceivable good, yes, inconceivable blessing lie in Him, and as such He belongs to His people. There might be light apart from the sun, but there could be no blessing apart from God, and on the other hand every sort of blessing is in God, and nothing is lacking in Him. He who is all good, and the source of all good, has made Himself our divine possession.

God is a sun. That is infinity of blessing. No man among us can conceive the measure of the light and heat of the sun. I suppose that calculations have been made by which the heat of the sun has been thought to be estimated, but the calculations must be beyond all ordinary numeration. Concerning the sun, its light, heat, and influence are beyond conception great. His light and heat have been continually streaming forth throughout many ages, and yet they are unabated to this hour, all that has come forth of it is far less than that which still remains. For all practical purposes the light and heat of the sun are infinite, and certainly in God all blessedness is absolutely infinite. There is no measuring it. We are lost. We

can only say—"Oh, the depths of the love and goodness of God!" In being heirs of God we possess all in all. There is no bound to our blessedness in God.

Further, if God is called a sun, it is to let us know that we have obtained an immutability of blessedness, for He is "the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." God is not love today and hate tomorrow. He says, "I am God, I change not." There are said to be spots in the sun which diminish the light and heat which we receive, but there are no such spots in God. He shines on with the boundless fullness of His infinite love toward His people in Christ Jesus. "This God is our God forever and ever." If we were to live as long as Methuselah we should find His love and power and wisdom to be the same, and we might confidently count upon being blessed thereby. What treasures of mercy do you and I possess in being able to say, "O God, You are my God!" We have the source of mercy, the infinity of mercy, and the immutability of mercy to be our own.

There much must be added concerning God as a sun—that He is forever communicating His light and heat and excellence to all who are about Him. I cannot conceive the sun shut up within itself. An unshining sun is a sun un-sunned. And a God that is not good and pouring forth His goodness has laid aside His deity. It is contrary to the very notion and idea of an infinitely good God for Him to restrain His goodness, and keep it back from His people. Thus then, beloved, you have not only God supremely good, but God abundantly giving Himself out to His people. He is not a spring shut up and a fountain sealed, but a springhead always flowing in winter and in summer. Nothing in God is reserved from His believing people. He gives Himself to you in all His fullness. All your needs shall be abundantly satisfied out of the riches of His goodness.

Has ever man such a task as I have in trying to speak of what is altogether unspeakable? Who shall fully extol this sun? Stand out in the open and look the sun full in the face for a little, and when blindness threatens you, learn how little we can know of the greater sun, the Sun of righteousness. And if thought fails, what shall speech do? How can it be possible for men to speak aright on such a text as this—"The Lord God is a sun"? Go, you cold words, and be exhaled in the presence of this central fire! Yet I can show you enough to let you see that there is more than I can show you. I can say enough to let you know that there is a great deal more than I can say or than you can hear. To speak on this theme calls for some of those words which they speak in heaven in the full blaze of the glory, words such as mortal tongues cannot compass. Fully to set forth the wondrous height and depth of this promise might need that same Spirit who of old dictated it to the Psalmist, and placed it in the sacred page. "The Lord God is a sun"—here is blessedness in its fullness.

II. Now, secondly—and this is a deeply interesting point—this glorious word of God gives us BLESSINGS IN THEIR COUNTERBALANCE.

Let me explain myself. One blessing alone might scarcely be a blessing, for in being too great a blessing it might crush us. We may have too much of a good thing. We need some other gift to balance the single benediction. So notice here, "The Lord God is a sun *and shield*." "Sun and shield" hang before my eyes like two golden scales. Each one adds value to the other. When God is a sun to His people, it may be He warms them into temporal prosperity with His bright beams, so that their goods increase, their body is in health, their trade succeeds, and their children are spared to them. They are grateful to God and joyful because of the blessings which He has bestowed upon them. He gives them their heart's desire. He permits them to enjoy the blessing of this life as well as the promise of the life that is to come. Yet danger lurks here. You have heard of sunstroke, and prosperous persons are very apt to feel it. Our poor heads cannot bear the full beams of the sun of prosperity, we are smitten down with pride, or carelessness, or worldliness, or some other ill. It is trying for the soul to bask in the unclouded sun. Temporal gains are blessings in themselves, but such is our poor nature that we do not make blessings of them, but we often make idols of them, and then they become curses. What a sweet mercy it is that when God prospers His children, and is a sun to them, He comes in at the same time and acts as their shield. The same God who is the pillar of fire to the hosts of Israel is also their pillar of cloud. Our hymn well puts it—

*"He has been my joy in woe,
Cheered my heart when it was low,
And with warnings softly sad,
Calmed my heart when it was glad."*

When everything is bright with us the Lord knows how to sober His children's spirits so that they use, but do not abuse, the things of this life. Even when they most abound with worldly joys, He makes His people feel that these are not their heart's joy. He shades us from the noxious effect of wealth and content. He makes rich and adds no sorrow therewith. He suffers not the sun to smite us by day. Is not this a gracious style of counterbalance?

"The Lord God is a sun and shield," too, when He shines upon us spiritually. Oh, how I rejoice in the sunny side of spiritual life. I do not always get it, but when I do reach it how happy I am. My heart is ready, like the gnats in the sunbeams, to dance up and down with intense delight. When God shines upon our soul, what gladness! What ecstasy! Then, truly, we would hardly change places with the angels, and as for kings and princes, we pity them. My God, lift up the light of Your countenance upon me, and I ask no more. It is heaven below. I know some of my brethren are often moping in the dungeon, but I guarantee you that when they do get out, they can dance with the nimblest, and they call for the merriest tunes too, for theirs is no, second-rate delight.

It is a great mercy that when God gives His people great spiritual joys He usually gives them a humbling sense of themselves at the same time. The shadow of their former depressions prevents their being unduly excited with their present joy, or else the forecast of another chastisement is given them, and this sobers them when they are inclined to be lifted up. The Lord has ways and means of letting His people be as happy as they can be, but yet not happier than they ought to be. He gives them grace so that they can be full of assurance, and yet full of holy fear, always rejoicing and yet never presuming, lifted up and yet lying low before the Lord. He gives them a well-mixed experience, and so forms an all-round character. While He is to them a sun producing rapid growth, He is also a shield forbidding their being burned up. He is their great Benefactor, but also their wise Chastener, and in both alike He blesses them.

Look at the text another way. When the sun shines upon a man he is made the more conspicuous by it. Suppose a hostile army to be down in the plain, and a soldier in our ranks is sent upon some errand by his captain. He must pass along the hillside. The sun shines upon him as he tries to make his way among the rocks and trees. Had it been night he could have moved safely, but now we fear that the enemy will surely pick him off, for the sunshine has made him conspicuous. He will need to be shielded from the many cruel eyes. Christian men are made conspicuous by the very fact of their possessing God's grace. You are the light of the world, and a light must be seen. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. If God gives you light, He means that light to be seen, and the more light He gives you the more conspicuous you will be. He is your sun, and He shines upon you, you reflect His light, and so become yourself a light, and in so doing you run necessary risks. The more brightly you shine the more will Satan and the world try to quench your light. This, then, is your comfort. The Lord God who is a sun to you will also be a shield to you. Did He not say to Abraham, "Fear not, I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward"? He will defend you against the dangers of publicity, or even of popularity, and if He sets you upon a high place He will make your feet like the feet of a gazelle, so that you shall stand upon your high places.

Consider the text yet again, still keeping to this idea of counterbalance. "The Lord God is a sun," and a sun manifests a thing, and this manifestation is not always a joy to us, but we need a defense with it. When the Lord shines in upon the heart of His people, they begin to see their sin, their guilt, their fall, their corruption, and then the Lord is a shield, and they are not overcome by the discovery. When they see the danger, at the same time they see the defense, and when they see the disease they see the remedy. It is a blessed thing not to see sin unless at the same time we see the Savior. It is a blessed thing not to have a sense of weakness in self unless it is accompanied with a sense of strength in the Lord. These two things most wisely balance each other, otherwise the revealing Spirit of God in showing us so much of our evil hearts, might almost drive us mad. If a man could see all his past sin, and all his present danger, and all the trials of his future life, he might lie down in despair, unless at the same time he was made to perceive that, if the Lord is a sun to reveal our danger, He is also a shield to secure our safety.

The Lord thus in His grace abounds toward us in all wisdom and prudence. He multiplies the value of the blessing by His wise way of dispensing it. He gives us the bitter medicine, but He also allots us the sweet cordial. He will sometimes chide, but He will not always do so. He will not give us too much of one blessing lest it spoil and breed overindulgence. He will give us another favor which shall make up a healthful mixture, yes, thus He does with all things, so that they work together for our good.

Dwell on my text, and especially on this noteworthy point in it—blessings in their counterbalance.

III. Very briefly let me submit to you the third idea, namely, BLESSINGS IN THEIR ORDER, for there is a due and meet succession in my text. “The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory.”

The Lord is to us first a sun and then a shield. Remember how David puts it elsewhere—“The Lord is my light and my salvation,” light first, salvation next. He does not save us in the dark; neither does He shield us in the dark. He gives enough sunlight to let us see the danger that we may appreciate the defense. We are not to shut our eyes and so find safety, but we are to see the evil and hide ourselves. Ought we not to be very grateful to God that He so orders our affairs? Ours is not a blind faith, receiving an unknown salvation from evils which are unperceived, this would be a poor form of life at best. No, the favor received is valued because its necessity is perceived. The heavenly sun lights up our souls and makes us see our ruin, and lie down in the dust of self-despair, and then it is that grace brings forth the shield which covers us, so that we are no more afraid, but rejoice in the glorious Lord as the God of our salvation.

Then notice the order of the next two things—grace and glory, not glory first. That could not be. We are not fit for it. Neither in body nor in soul are we fit for glory before grace. We could not possibly receive glory while we are sinners, for a glorified sinner would be a strange sight. Grace must first blot out our sin. To take the rebel from the prison and put him among the children would be dangerous work unless his crime was pardoned and he was reconciled to his king. Grace must come in to change the nature. We could not enter glory or enjoy it by any possibility while we are sinful at heart. An unregenerate heart could not enter into the joy of the Lord. Only the pure in heart can see God, carnal eyes are blind to spiritual things. Grace must renew us or glory cannot receive us. Grace must change, regenerate, sanctify, or we cannot take our places among the perfected ones. Glory without grace would be mockery. The prepared place would be no heaven if the people were not also prepared.

As in this case there is order, you will find it so in all the arrangements of the Lord’s house. One blessing is a steppingstone to another. The holy leads on to the holiest, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The Lord gives mercies in succession, and He never gives you number two till you have been qualified for it by receiving number one. “They go from strength to strength.” He gives life and then life more abundantly. First grace, and then, grace upon grace. God abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence, leading us, as we do our boys, from their first-class books up to their classics, and taking care to ground us in each successive ascent of knowledge. Step by step we rise towards God, until at last we shall see the Savior’s face and shall be like Him.

Blessings in their order. Treasure this up, for it may be a ground of comfort to you. When you get clamoring for number seven, it may, perhaps, calm you a little if you remember that you must first have number six. Plod on step by step. Walk without fainting from one stage to another, and you shall surely come unto the Mountain of God.

IV. Fourthly, and again briefly, BLESSINGS IN PREPARATION AND BLESSINGS IN MATURITY. “The Lord will give grace and glory.” Grace is glory in the bud, you shall see the rod of Aaron full of blooming graces, but this is not all—glory is grace in ripe fruit, the rod shall bear ripe almonds. The Lord will give you both, the dawn and the noon, the Alpha and the Omega, grace and glory.

Let us be very grateful that God deals in preparatory mercies. If He had provided heaven, and we were to make ourselves fit for it, we should never get there. Yes, and there are many stages of spiritual experience which are not to be attained unless God gives us preliminary educating grace to come at them. The blessing is that all that is necessary to reach any gracious attainment is as much promised as the blessing itself.

Is it so, my poor friend, that you cannot this morning lay hold of a promise? You are such a babe in grace. Well, our heavenly Father has an infant class in His school and a nursery in His house. He will teach you as a child, and give you a child’s portion upon which you shall feed, and by which you shall grow. Do not be afraid to ask of God the beginnings of things. I know that sometimes in our prayers we feel that we are so blameworthy for our stupidity that we hardly dare ask to be taught the simple truths which we ought to know, but we must not give way to this proud humility, we must beg even to be taught our A B C’s. Suppose we need to be helped to overcome an irritable temper, let us not be ashamed to acknowledge the need, but confess it and pray for help. Do we need grace to bear our little daily trials? Then let us seek everyday grace. Ask for a babe’s blessings, for God is prepared to give

them. Does He not say, “I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms”? “The Lord will give grace and glory.”

Brethren, we shall need much training to fit us to sing among the choristers above. Discords and false notes abound, and we must be tutored out of them into a richness of sweet tones and ordered harmonies. If we look into ourselves carefully we shall be shocked with the sight of our own unworthiness to mingle with perfect beings. I do not know how you feel about yourselves, but I grow worse and worse in my own judgment. I hope that I am more sanctified in many respects, but I am also more conscious of my need of fuller sanctification. The fact is that the more light a soul obtains, the more it perceives its darkness and laments it. The more God makes you holy, the more unholy you will judge yourself to be. No man groans so deeply, “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” as the man who is nearest to complete deliverance from all evil. The last relics of sin are more horrible to the godly man than the full empire of sin to the newly awakened. Even the very thought of sin, the flitting of it through his soul like a bird across the sky, becomes a calamity to the full-grown saint, and he cries out against it. “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” He who glories that he is perfectly sanctified must either have lowered the standard of holiness or else he has an exaggerated conceit of his own excellence. He who does not daily struggle against sin is in darkness and error, and I fear the life of God is not in his soul. In proportion as God has dealt with a man he will cry out for a something yet beyond him, and press forward to that which is before. Oh, how I long to be perfectly rid of sin and of every liability to fall into it. And here is the mercy—that the Lord will give grace. All the grace that is needed to make you absolutely perfect God will bestow. He will reveal His righteousness from faith to faith, and we shall go from grace to grace. Faith shall lead on to full assurance, hope shall brighten into expectancy, love shall flame into burning zeal, and so we shall rise on eagles’ wings from grace to glory; not only the light of the lamp in its full brilliance, but the wick and the oil and the trimming, the Lord will give.

Furthermore, the Lord will not deny you the maturity, namely, glory. He who gives us breakfast in grace will cause us to sup with Him in glory.

Now, here I am altogether beaten. What shall I say of glory? What do I know of it? Matthew Wilks once said, “Man is the glory of the world; the soul is the glory of man; grace is the glory of the soul; and heaven is the glory of grace.” This is true, but still what do any of us know of glory in its heavenly sense? The Lord will give us nothing less than glory. We deserve shame, He will give us glory. We deserve misery, but He will give us glory. We deserve condemnation, but He will give us glory. We deserve death and hell, but He will give us glory.

What is glory? He that has been in heaven five minutes can tell you better than the sagest divine that lives, and yet he could not tell you. No, the angels could not tell you, you would not understand them. What is glory? You must enjoy it to know it. Glory is not merely rest, happiness, wealth, safety; it is honor, victory, immortality, triumph. You know what men call “glory” here below. The people climb to the housetops and throng the streets, and sound the clarions because a conqueror has returned from war and brings with him huge spoils. See how he stands erect, drawn in his chariot by milk-white steeds. Follow him up the Via Sacra to the Capitol at Rome. Men count him happy because he is surrounded with glory. What is this glory? Smoke, noise, dust, and oblivion, that is all. But glory as the Lord uses the term, what is it? It is that which surrounds Himself, for He is the King of glory. It is that which crowns every attribute, for we read of the glory of His power and the glory of His grace. It is the outcome of all His plans and thoughts and works, for in all things He is glorified. It is that which His dear Son inherits, for He has entered into His glory. We shall be with Him where He is, and shall behold His glory. Yes, it is of this unutterable thing that we shall partake, and that so soon! “Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

V. Now, fifthly and finally, BLESSINGS IN THEIR UNIVERSALITY. I have noticed that lawyers, who will always go into particulars as much as they can in their deeds—an excellent method of adding to their fees—yet usually are obliged to sum up with a general clause which includes all they have said and all they ought to have said. They use some sweeping final sentence to comprehend all the mentionable and unmentionables, all that can be remembered and all that might be forgotten. Now, the last part of my text is of that character—“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Is there some good thing which does not come to us by the Lord’s being our sun? We shall not lose on that account. Is there another good thing which cannot be included in God’s being our shield? We shall not be

deprived of that. Is there some good thing that cannot be comprehended in grace? I cannot imagine what it can be, but if there is such a thing, we shall not miss even that. Is there some good thing that is not comprehended even in glory? Well, it does not matter, we shall have it, for here stands the boundless promise—“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

“Well,” says someone, “but God has denied me many good things!” Yes, then they would not be good things to you. What has God done to you, then? “He has made me to be sickly in body, He has caused me to be poor, and I am tried in many ways.” In this He has fulfilled His word, that no good thing should be withheld from you. I have known a father who boasted that he never laid a hand on his children by way of chastising them. I sometimes wished that he had done so, for his children were a sad plague to all who called at the house. Now, that father was withholding a good thing from his children—a touch of the birch would have been most wholesome. Our heavenly Father never says of any of His elect, “I never laid a hand upon them,” but it is written, “As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.” God had one Son without sin, but He never had a son without chastisement. O you who are tried and afflicted, the Lord has not withheld from you the blessing of His rod. Accept trials from God, and believe that they are tokens of His love. If there is anything you wish for and cannot get it from God, then, depend upon it, it would not be a good thing for you. If there is any apparently evil thing which comes to you plenteously, and you would gladly avoid it, depend upon it, it really is a good thing or else the Lord would not have sent it to you.

“Alas,” cries one, “there are many good things which I have not received.” Whose fault is that? What does the text say? It does not say, “I will force all My children to enjoy every good thing.” No, but, “No good thing will He withhold.” There are thousands of mercies that we do not enjoy, not because they are withheld, but because we do not take them. We are not straitened in God, but in ourselves. We are empty because we do not accept the fullness of Christ. If we were to be introduced into some of the depots in London that are full of articles most rich and rare, and the owners were to say, “Now, take whatever you please,” we should help ourselves with a degree of liberality. But when the Lord takes us into the storehouses of His grace, we have not faith enough to ask for large things. We might have ten times as much—ten thousand times as much—if we would. Many of God’s people are pining on a pittance when they might feast in plenty. They are eating the coarsest meal, and wearing the roughest garment—I mean spiritually—and going about sighing and crying, and doubting and fearing, and all the while there is the bread of heaven on the table for them, and the robe of Christ’s righteousness is prepared for them to wear. They might dwell at heaven’s gate, but they condemn themselves to the dunghill.

Come, brothers and sisters, let us change all this, and if the Lord has said, “No good thing will I withhold,” let us put Him to the test. Among other things, let us ask Him to give us more joy in the Lord—a fuller assurance and confidence in Him, and He will give it to us. Do not let us be poor by self-inflicted poverty, but let us rise to the riches which are presented to us in this blessed text. I wish I knew how to preach from it, but pray take an hour this afternoon, and do with the text as the cow does with the grass when she has been round the meadow and satisfied herself. She lies down and chews the cud. If you will ruminate by meditation you will find more in the text than I shall ever be able to bring out of it. May the Lord feed you upon this choice portion, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

**PORTIONS OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 84, EPHESIANS 1.
HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—912, 89 (VERSION 2), 688.**

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